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# KITCHENS & BATHS

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# two-cook kitchens

With an extra sink and defined zones, helpers can join in

WRITTEN BY BILL PARTSCH



PHOTOGRAPH: WOLF

**ABOVE:** A second cook doesn't require a second cooktop. One 48-inch unit should provide enough elbow room for two people to stand side by side, although this happens far less often than you might imagine.

Couples who like to cook together need kitchens with the right features and layout to allow them to conquer their respective tasks without getting in each other's way.

The notion of an additional cook may spark visions of dual ovens, cooktops and refrigerators, but two cooks does not mean two kitchens. Sure, an auxiliary fridge and a bonus oven can come in handy, but only one of each major appliance is absolutely necessary to create a kitchen for multiple cooks. Instead, doubling up on plumbing fixtures and dividing a single

kitchen into zones is the key to making the space work. "The primary thing when you have a two-cook kitchen is to have two sinks," says Ann Morris, CMKBD, of Allied Kitchen & Bath in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"In the two-cook kitchen, only one person is actually cooking," says Don Silvers, CKD, of Kitchen Design With Cooking in Mind in Los Angeles, and by cooking, he means working at the cooktop. "The other person is prepping." Both designers suggested that a 48-inch cooktop—as opposed to a second cooktop—is

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Buy sharp, inexpensive knives for guest chefs; keep the good knives to yourself.

Stamped 8-inch cook's knives: Left, from Dexter-Russell, \$36 ([www.dexter-russell.com](http://www.dexter-russell.com)); right, from Victorinox, \$34 ([www.swissarmy.com](http://www.swissarmy.com)).





PHOTOGRAPH BY VIKING

**RIGHT:** An extra sink is the key to adding an extra cook. The faucet on the island belongs to a prep sink, located as it should be, close to the cooking surface.

the solution for couples that actually want to sauté simultaneously (although Silvers says he almost never encounters such situations).

#### THE CLEAN-UP ZONE

Appliance placement in a two-cook kitchen has a lot to do with sink location. Putting sinks near appliances and other items associated with their primary tasks defines two key kitchen zones—the clean-up zone and the prep zone.

The sink anchors each zone. “You have a clean-up sink and a prep sink,” Silvers says. “The clean-up sink should be in line with the high-volume eating area. Let’s say you have a dining area and a breakfast area. The clean-up sink should be near the one you eat at more.” The dishwasher and storage for dishes, glasses, flatware and serving pieces should also be close

to the clean-up sink. It seems an obvious point, yet it’s one that Silvers finds too frequently overlooked. “Dishes should be stored where they come out of the dishwasher,” he says. “If we keep things where we use them, we don’t have to walk all over the place.”

#### THE PREP ZONE

The prep sink, “has to be in a direct line with the cooktop and the microwave,” Silvers says. The refrigerator should also be nearby, along with knives and other prep tools, pots and pans and spices. “You’re either going to prep food to go back to the refrigerator or to go to the cooktop or oven.” Of course, counter space is also necessary. Morris says each work area requires at least a 2-foot-long stretch of countertop. “Three feet is better,” she says.



**must have**

**This cleverly divided prep sink comes with work bowls that lock into place.**

Frankie Beach 88X-160 prep sink, \$1,300 list price.  
800-626-5771; [www.frankeconsumerproducts.com](http://www.frankeconsumerproducts.com)



ABOVE: Two people actually heating food simultaneously usually means one of them is using an oven, like this feature-laden MasterChef double oven from Miele. \$5,000. 888-346-4353; [www.miele.com](http://www.miele.com).

#### SINKS AND TRAFFIC

Sink placement can also help govern traffic. "In a galley kitchen," says Morris, "sink number one can be a large sink that can be used for prep or clean up." The second sink would most likely be prep only and would be on the opposite side of the galley.

In any setup where cooks are standing back-to-back, Morris recommends at least four feet of aisle space. "If not, you have to stagger the sinks," she says. To avoid situating cooks back-to-back in kitchens with islands, she recommends placing the

sink at one end of the island and perpendicular to the other sink.

Once a kitchen is set up to handle two cooks, adding helpers is a matter of finding enough countertop to prep. "If a design works, depending on the size of the space, you can have a lot of people working in a kitchen," Silvers says.

Ultimately, the two-cook kitchen is about something more profound than just heating food. "What people really want is to be together, working together, making a meal together," Silvers says. ♦

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